A

CANDID ENQUIRY

INTO THE

PRESENT RUINED STATE

OF THE

FRENCH MONARCHY.

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE

Late deſpotick Reduction of the Intereſt of the National Debt of FRANCE.

" *Pour que l'etat monarchique ſe ſoûtienne, le luxe doit aller en croiſſant, du laboreur à l'artiſan, au negociant, aux nobles, aux magiſtrats, aux grands ſeigneurs, aux traitans principaux, aux princes, ſans quoi tout ſeroit perdu.*"

MONTESQUIEU.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ALMON, oppoſite Burlington Houſe in Piccadilly.

M DCC LXX.

R.P.C.

PREFACE

BY THE

EDITOR.

THE following letter was lately received from an Engliſh gentleman, who now reſides, and has the greateſt part of his life reſided in France.

The perſon to whom it was wrote, preſuming that all national power, and the happineſs of individuals, are merely relative, and beſt known by compariſon, he has, without any motive of private intereſt, given it to the publick, as he will do ſome other letters, which ſhortly he expects to receive on the ſame ſubject.

Every candid, impartial man will then judge, if there is any reſemblance of the healthy florid, portrait, that was given the laſt winter of the French monarchy, by a timorous, deſponding party in this country under the title of THE PRESENT STATE OF THE NATION.

That

That work was ſo well calculated for the meridian of France, the ſentiments in it were ſo voluptuouſly devoured by the people of that country, that it in ſome degree alleviated their own misfortunes, to find from that work our own nation was involved in ſtill greater diſtreſſes than what they themſelves ſo bitterly taſted.

The miſrepreſentations in that performance, which relates to our own national affairs, has been ſo fully and ſo circumſtantially confuted by the ſpirited, ingenious writer of THE OBSERVATIONS on that work, as leaves nothing more to be ſaid on that part of the ſubject: and the following letter may perhaps tend to ſhew, that the author of THE STATE OF THE NATION, conceived as many erroneous opinions of the affairs of the French government, as he did of the ſtate of his own country.

If in England, from the contention of parties, and the common courſe of human affairs, we do not enjoy perfect happineſs, let us at leaſt have a due ſenſe of our own national dignity, and importance, and the ſuperior advantages we enjoy over our rivals, the French, or perhaps any other nation the ſun ever yet roſe upon.

A

CANDID ENQUIRY, &c.

LETTER I.

Chantelou in Touraine, Dec. 4, 1769.

My Lord,

SENSIBLE of the honour which your Lordſhip's approbation of my ſentiments does me, and deſirous of ſhewing the high value I put upon your eſteem and friendſhip, I ſhall no longer delay complying with the repeated requeſt in your Lordſhip's late letters, to ſend you in writing the ſubſtance of thoſe frequent converſations we had, during your reſidence in this country, relative to the preſent declining ſtate of the French nation.

Your Lordſhip is pleaſed to tell me, that my arguments firſt gave you conviction of the miſtake you had long been in, of entertaining too high notions of the preſent power and greatneſs of the French nation; and now deſire me to tranſmit to you in writing thoſe arguments, to convince ſome of your friends of birth and high rank in England, who are alſo prepoſſeſſed with the ſame too favourable, but ill-grounded opinion of the power of France.

But though a compliance with your Lordſhip's requeſt will afford no ſmall pleaſure to myſelf; and though I have reſided in this country the greateſt part of my life, and been in the occaſion to ſee the interior ſtate of the government of France, its operations and effects, at no great diſtance, yet I fear your Lordſhip has deſired of me a taſk, almoſt incompatible with thoſe few hours which my health will permit me to devote to ſo great an undertaking.

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A declining ſtate of health, now more than twenty years ago, was, as your Lordſhip may remember, my firſt inducement to reſide in this country; when from ſickneſs, and a want of reliſh for the pleaſures and gaieties of the world, I reſolved to divert my hours by more rational and beneficial amuſements, and to gratify my curioſity by acquiring a clearer conception and knowledge of men and things; and in the purſuit of which nothing has afforded me greater pleaſure and inſtruction, than an enquiry into the cauſes that have moſt apparently contributed to the increaſe and progreſs of national ſtrength and power; and alſo to the decline of thoſe ſtates and kingdoms, which, for a time, had dazzled and awed the world with their ſplendor and greatneſs, and then as rapidly ſunk again into that obſcurity and unimportance, from which originally they aroſe.

In peruſing hiſtory, my Lord, I have found it to be little elſe than a recapitula-

tion of the perpetually fluctuating ſtate of national power and greatneſs ; and that all ſtates and kingdoms have aroſe, and again declined, from almoſt ſimilar cauſes.

The glory and magnificence of the Greek and Roman empires, and of many other antient nations, which now lie buried in oblivion, we ſhall have no need to mention, as we ſhall find in ſome of our neighbouring ſtates, wherein we are much more intereſted, ſufficient to gratify our curioſity on this ſubject. The rapid decline of the Spaniſh and French monarchies, which have, in the two laſt centuries, acted the moſt diſtinguiſhed parts in the affairs of Europe, are more immediate objects of our attention ; and to the latter of theſe nations I ſhall, according to your Lordſhip's deſire, confine my thoughts in this, and the *future* letters, I ſhall have the honour of tranſmitting to you.

After the dread of univerſal empire, cauſed by Charles the Fifth of Spain, and the profuſe, extravagant conduct of his

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ſon, Philip the Second, the balance of power in Europe ſeemed to be ſo equally poized, as to remove any danger or fear of ſuch univerſal conqueſts, as had in former ages rendered ſo many nations ſlaves to the power and vanity of one prince.

Louis the Fourteenth of France was the laſt ſovereign in Europe, who alarmed the other princes in it with the danger of univerſal monarchy. Born at a time when all the neighbouring courts were ſunk into a ſtate of ſupineneſs and inactivity, favourable to the projects of a young ambitious monarch, he did not fail to take the advantage of it, and indulge the fondneſs he received from nature, of diſplaying his power, and acting the tyrant.

His ambition was indeed well ſupported by the abilities of his miniſters, and the talents of his generals; but after making, for more than half a century, ſuch efforts in war, and ſuch profuſe expences in peace, as none of his predeceſſors had ever attempted, he loſt, in the decline of life,

that

that brilliant reputation of a great ſovereign, with which, in the meridian of his reign, he had impoſed upon and over-awed all Europe; and he deſcended to his grave, not with the character of a great or wiſe prince, but of the beſt *actor* of majeſty that ever ſat upon a throne.

The wiſe adminiſtrations of Richlieu and Mazarine, the decline of the power of Spain, and many other cauſes, conſpired together to give him a power and ſuperiority, with which he long inſulted all his neighbours.

By nature turbulent, haughty, and inſolent, he at laſt became as odious to all Europe, as he ought to have been deteſtable to his own people, for the wanton, profuſe manner in which he trifled away their blood and their treaſure.

But from the ſplendor of his court, the magnificence of his buildings, the encouragement of arts, and by all the exterior pomp and appearance of glory and ſuperior greatneſs, the people, through their national vanity, were ſo intoxicated, and the

deluſion

deluſion amongſt them was ſo general, till the laſt years of his reign, that, even amongſt the ſober thinking men, very few of them, I believe, ſaw half the fatal conſequences that would, in time, attend a reign of more than fifty years of the moſt abſurd profuſion, and ridiculous ſplendor, that the weſtern nations had ever been witneſs to.

Louis the Fourteenth of France, like Philip the Second of Spain, left his ſucceſſor a ruined nation. He left him, what was worſe, his example and his principles of government, founded in ambition, in pride, in oſtentation, and all the ridiculous ſhew and pageantry of ſtate.

The regent of France, during the minority of the preſent king, by nature giddy, bold, and intrepid, ignorant of the diſtreſſes to which the nation, by the expenſive war for the Spaniſh ſucceſſion, was reduced, and hurried on by ambition to act the part of a ſovereign, attempted, a few years after the tranquility of Europe was ſettled by the peace of Utrecht,

to

to tear that crown from the brows of a prince of Bourbon, ſettled on the throne of Spain, which Louis the Fourteenth had exhauſted the very vitals of his country to place there. The regent ſtill did worſe. Uninformed of, and a ſtranger to the wiſe principles of a modern ſtateſman, he gave *public credit* many fatal wounds, which ſtill are bleeding; and wantonly committed as many miſtakes and frolicks with the finances of the nation, and the private fortunes of the people, as could well be preſſed into ſo ſhort an adminiſtration; for he expired, according to the anecdotes I have heard, in a rapture of pleaſure, in the arms of his miſtreſs, in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and twenty-two.

The conduct of the regent, during the memorable tranſactions of the Miſſiſippi ſcheme, will ever remain a monument of his folly, injuſtice, and ambition. The wounds he then gave to the credit of France, were bitterly felt during the late war. They are ſtill felt, and will con-

tinue

tinue to be ſo, whilſt all the vices of the preſent form of government continue to ſubſiſt in the nation.

The preſent monarch of France, tho' untainted with the vain ambition of a hero and a conqueror, hath, by the reſtleſs temper and haughty diſpoſition of his miniſters, been involved, ſince his acceſſion, in two ſuch expenſive wars as hath entirely effuſed the ſmall ſhare of ſtrength and vigour, which the nation had recruited by the long peace that preceded them; and by the violent efforts he made in both, ſo ſuperior to, and inconſiſtent with, the debilitated ſtrength of his ſtate, that from a progreſs of the original vices of the government, the ruined condition of the landed intereſt, the heavy load of national debt, and the entire loſs of public credit, the French nation is now reduced to a more conſumptive and exhauſted ſtate than ſhe ever was before involved in: and as all the great pillars of the ſtate are now become corrupted and decayed, with an enormous weight of diſtreſſes preſſing

upon them, we ſhall, without the interpoſition of Providence, or ſome eſſential revolutions and changes in the preſent form and mode of her government, ſee, even in our own days, the French nation ſink into the ſame ſtate of nerveleſs indigence and poverty, which the Spaniſh monarchy hath long been buried in.

Inſenſible of their approaching fate, with a levity and folly conſtitutional to all ranks of that people, the preſent court of France have adopted the ſame ſplendid and ambitious notions of government, with which they had, during the happier and more vigorous times of the late reign, dazzled and impoſed upon all their neighbours: but the deception, however, is now confined to themſelves; and to ſuch ſuperficial ſtateſmen and people of other countries, who take appearances for realities, and judge of the preſent power of France, from thoſe ſhort and tranſient periods of greatneſs, which ſhone forth with ſo much luſtre during the meridian of the laſt reign.

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The power by which they formerly, with ſo much inſolence and haughtineſs, took the lead in all the affairs of Europe, is now no more: the ambition only remains. To ſupport appearances, they are now forced to ſtrain every nerve of government; they maintain unneceſſary, formidable armies, a ſplendid magnificent court, and in every department of the ſtate, a moſt enormous and extravagant peace eſtabliſhment, for the empty conſolation of impoſing upon their own people, and ſome of their rivals, with the appearances of a power, which (I hope to prove to your Lordſhip) is no more natural, or the effects of health and vigour, than the rouge, which is dawbed upon the face of a tawdry antiquated Ducheſs at Verſailles is of youth and beauty; who may, in the juſteſt ſenſe of an allegory, be looked upon as an emblematic figure of the preſent ſtate and political government of France; ſhe, in her happier days, might have made conqueſts, and been an object of admiration; but to attempt it in the decline of

life, when nature is exhauſted, and health and beauty fled, by the arts only of the toilette, is ſuch an impoſition upon common ſenſe, as raiſes no paſſions but contempt and ridicule.

The affairs of government in this country, my Lord, are all deception and deluſion; and individuals, like the government, from their national vanity, and the example of their monarch, always live far above their eſtates and fortunes: but tho' all their magnificence is no more than ſplendid poverty, yet, ſo much do the French miniſters, by various arts and expedients, keep up the appearances of a formidable power, that many men, who ſtood in high ſtations in the different courts of Europe, are, like ſome of your Lordſhip's friends in England, as much deceived and miſtaken in their opinions of the preſent power of France, and in the ſame ridiculous degree as they have been partial to, and fond of, its language, its wines, its modes, its vices, and its follies.

So

So great indeed hath been the addreſs and refined artifice of the miniſters of France, in impoſing upon mankind with the formidable appearances of their power, that, in confidence of the timidity of ſome former Engliſh miniſters, we have had the mortification to ſee the *Pelhams*, more than once, ſit trembling in their Chateau at *Lewes*, from a dread of an invaſion; when, in fact, as well as true policy, they might not only have pulled the maſk from the enemy's face, and diſcovered their ſmile of ridicule at our abſurd fears, but have thrown the French into a real and much greater conſternation, by playing the ſame game actually upon them.

In this obſervation, my Lord, I am confirmed by the events that happened in the laſt war: the great ſtateſman and commoner, who ſo happily and gloriouſly conducted that war, well knew the infinite reſources of our own opulent country, and all the falſe pretenſions to power and greatneſs of its vain and feeble rivals. That able miniſter, ſenſible of the ſtrength

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of Great-Britain and the weakneſs of France, ſoon convinced our enemies he was not be impoſed upon, like the *Pelhams*, with the falſe appearance of power: on the contrary, he, upon all occaſions, treated them not only in the active part of the war, but in the farcical negociation they began for peace, in the year one thouſand ſeven-hundred and ſixty-one, with a dignity conſiſtent with his own, and the honour of the nation, in whoſe ſervice he was engaged: ſo far from being intimidated with their idle menaces of an invaſion, he ſmiled with contempt at their ridiculous affectation, and bravely invaded and inſulted them upon their own coaſts; which, after all their vain bluſterings and ſeeming formidable preparations, they never had either courage or ſtrength to put in execution upon ours. This invading them, upon their own coaſts, my Lord, not only expoſed their falſe pretenſions to power, but alſo mortified their national vanity, and rendered them greater objects of ridicule in the eyes of their neighbours, than

all

all the other loſſes and diſgraces they ſuſtained in the war.

Theſe ſucceſſes, my Lord, of the miniſters of France, have always aroſe much more from ſubtilty and refined addreſs, in taking advantage of the favourable circumſtances in the times, than from the weight and importance of their real ſtrength and power: of the truth of which, the ſtrange manner in which the preſent miniſter of France hath lately made the valuable acquiſition of Corſica, whilſt the nation is ſtaggering under the burthens of the late war, is a ſtriking proof: being ſenſible of the inteſtine troubles that now prevail, not only in England, but in every part of its extenſive dominions, he well knows how to take the advantage of them. An acquiſition ſo valuable as Corſica, and gained at ſo ſmall an expence, hath given the miniſter (as his friends ſay) a ſupreme contempt for the councils of his rivals, and added greatly to the opinion of his own ſuperior national ſtrength and political addreſs.

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An unjuſtifiable invaſion like this, upon an inoffenſive ſtate, and free people, in a time of profound peace, would, under different circumſtances of the times, have rouſed the reſentment of all Europe againſt them, whatever caſuiſtry and ſophiſtry they might have pleaded in defence of it. The whole world may remember, that their encroachments on the banks of the Ohio produced the firſt ſparks of fire which lighted up the flames of the late war, that ſpread itſelf into the four quarters of the globe : ſuch encroachment was ſurely of much leſs importance than the iſland of Corſica, from which, by its adjacent ſituation, the French can now conſtantly draw, at a very cheap rate, any quantity of the moſt excellent ſhip-timber they may want, for the ſupply of the royal navy at Toulon ; and which, before this acquiſition, they had no other means of procuring, than what they could get, at an enormous expence, and a tedious delay of many months, from the groves of Norway.

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An acquiſition ſo valuable as Corſica, and obtained at ſo little expence, might flatter the vanity of a nation leſs ſuſceptible of it than the French: but unhappily for the repoſe of Europe, the chief miniſter of France is ſo intoxicated with ambition, and conceptions of the ſuperior power of his own country, and ſo ignorant of the real ſtrength of his rivals, that he hath a knowledge yet to acquire, which of all others, is the moſt important and intereſting for a wiſe miniſter to know.

What I mean, my Lord, is ſo happily explained by a noble author *, who wrote in this country, and whoſe letters I read with more pleaſure, as I read them on the ſpot where they were written; his obſervations are ſo judicious, ſo agreeable to truth, and ſo applicable to the preſent ſtate of the Engliſh and French nations, that I will make no apology for quoting them.

" The preciſe point of time, ſays this noble author, at which the ſcales of power be-

* Lord Bolingbroke.

tween rival nations turn, like that of the ſolſtice in either tropic, is imperceptible to common obſervation; and in one caſe, as in the other, ſome progreſs muſt be made in the new direction, before the change is perceiv'd. They who are in the ſinking ſcale, for in the political balance of power, unlike to all others, the ſcale that is empty, ſinks, and that which is full, riſes; they who are in the ſinking ſcale, do not eaſily come off from the habitual prejudices of ſuperior wealth and power, or ſkill and courage; nor from the confidence theſe prejudices inſpire. They who are in the riſing ſcale, do not immediately feel their ſtrength, nor aſſume that confidence in it, which ſucceſsful experience afterwards gives them: they who are moſt concerned to watch the variations of this balance, misjudge often in the ſame manner, and from the ſame prejudices. They continue to dread a power no longer able to hurt them, as the other continues to have no apprehenſions of a power that daily grows more formidable. Spain verified

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this obſervation a little more than a century ago, when proud and poor, and enterprizing and feeble, ſhe thought herſelf a match for France." And France, at the preſent time, my Lord, again confirms the obſervation; for exhauſted as ſhe is, by the ſame cauſes which reduced Spain, ſhe does not perceive her ſcale of power ſunk, but ſtill entertains the ſame ambition and pride which formerly prevailed in the councils of Madrid.

The quarrels between modern nations, my Lord, are decided principally by a full and proper exertion of the finances of the contending parties; and the events of thoſe numerous wars that have happened in Europe, ſince the diſcovery of the new world, are ſufficient to convince every rational man, that thoſe nations, which have the greateſt reſources in their commerce and wealth, will generally come off triumphant and victorious.

The brave inhabitants of Great Britain, are, my Lord, the only people in the world, who have ever united the know-

ledge and activity of war, with the laborious employments of agriculture and trade; and from theſe advantages alone, tho' they were but a handful of people compared to the number of their confederate enemies, ſupported in the laſt with the moſt aſtoniſhing vigour and ſucceſs, the moſt active and extenſive war that ever yet happened amongſt the powers of Europe. The fame of our arms, like that of our commerce, was carried into the four quarters of the world, and the Engliſh banners were triumphantly flying even in the Manilla Iſlands, the moſt diſtant part of the globe. From the effects of our commerce and our wealth, we not only alone ſtood ſingle in the quarrel againſt the united force of France and Spain, but nobly ſupported too the crowns of Pruſſia and Portugal, which tottered on the heads of thoſe princes, before they received our ſupport and protection.

The national credit of England, my Lord, which is ſo eſſential a cauſe of its power and greatneſs, is a diſcovery entirely

tirely new in the hiſtory of human affairs, and to conſider it with all its amazing advantages, is the nobleſt monument of political wiſdom, that ever yet was framed by mortal invention: it is not the abundance of the precious metals alone which conſtitute the riches of a State, as we may ſee by the preſent beggarly ruined ſituation of Spain and Portugal: thoſe metals are no more than a repreſenting *mark*, given in exchange for the wants and neceſſities of men: England, without a fatal poſſeſſion of the mines of gold and ſilver, hath diſcovered a *mark* which repreſents them as effectually; and was it not for fear of appearing too warm in my admiration of this amazing diſcovery, I would ſay, that the ſhirt of the meaneſt peaſant, when worn to rags, may, by the art of manufacture, be fabricated into Bank-bills and government ſecurities, of more intrinſic value than the revenues of Potoſi and Peru; for they, and the more precious ſtones that are dug out of the bowels

els of the earth, receive their value only from the opinions and eſtimation of men.

This credit of the French nation hath, on the contrary, my Lord, received ſo many fatal blows, by the wanton folly of the different miniſters both in the laſt and preſent reign, that it is now no longer a reſource of government; and from the want of this important ſuccour, they received, in their laſt ſtruggle with Great Britain, every diſtreſs and diſgrace that could poſſibly attend the moſt unſucceſsful war; ſhe not only ſaw her commerce and marine entirely deſtroyed, but after thoſe ſeeming vigorous efforts in the beginning of the war, which an abſolute and a military government is, from the nature of its conſtitution, ſo well adapted to make, the vitals of the State were ſo ſoon exhauſted, that ſo early in the war as the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and fifty nine, ſhe was reduced to the fatal neceſſity of ſhutting up her ſinking fund, appropriated for the payments of the intereſt of her national debt, and to apply its

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produce towards the expences of the war; and which, in ſpite of all the plauſible excuſes made by her miniſters, was at beſt but a partial bankruptcy with her creditors, and did not fail to produce that effect; for, after that violence done to good faith and public credit, ſhe was compelled to give the moſt exorbitant intereſt for money to all from whom it could be obtained; even for thoſe ſums that were borrowed upon the edicts, regiſtered in the parliament of Paris, which then became the debts of the State. I have now before me proof, was it neceſſary, that ſhe paid for it from ten to twelve per cent. intereſt; and for thoſe great ſums lent by the corporation-towns, collective bodies of men, and the rich individuals, upon the king's perſonal ſecurity (a ſuperficial mode of credit, which you in England are unacquainted with) the intereſt was ſtill more exorbitant; and for want of ready money to go to market for the ſupply of her armies and navy, the contractors for both did not make leſs than from

ſixty

ſixty to ſeventy per cent. on their bargains: reduced as ſhe was for want of money, ſhe at laſt had no better reſource than that contemptible expedient of melting down the plate of her people; and which, from the moſt favourable accounts of the different mints, did not produce more than between ſix and ſeven hundred thouſandpounds ſterling: but the taxes were ſo exorbitant, ſo numerous, and ſo ſenſibly felt, that the load was at laſt become inſupportable: for at the time of the peace, the people were even ſtaggering under the burthen of a third vingtieme, and a double capitation: circumſtances of ſuch diſtreſs and oppreſſion as had never before happened ſince the exiſtence of that monarchy.

In a former part of this letter, I juſt hinted to your Lordſhip, that the power and internal ſtrength of nations were beſt known by their wars and quarrels with their neighbours; for then only they make a full exertion of their wealth and their finances: but whatever, my Lord, may be

be the ſucceſſes of a war, the advantages at laſt reaped from it, fatal experience hath ſhewn, are ſeldom adequate to the expences of the blood and treaſure of it: for war is a game that may be played ſo many different ways; it admits of ſo many various expedients, even with the neighbouring powers, not engaged in it; the paſſions, the caprices, the follies, and even the different ſentiments of wiſe men are ſo eſſentially concerned in, and mixed with its operations, that at the concluſion, it is, of all things, the moſt difficult to tear, even from a ruined and exhauſted enemy, an equivalent for the loſs of blood and treaſure expended in it.

Our own nation, my Lord, hath acquired as much honour in its quarrels, as any other kingdom can boaſt of; but the conqueſts, that bring glory to its armies, may alſo bring diſtreſſes upon the ſtate, to which they belong. The country where I now reſide, my Lord, hath gained more by ſome of its wars, within the laſt century, than any other nation in Europe:

the trifling expence, both in blood and treaſure, of the late acquiſition of Corſica, is known to every one; the conqueſt of Alſace of Franche Comté, and of the Spaniſh low countries, by the late ſovereign of France, and the important acquiſition of the principality of Lorraine by the preſent, were, in no degree, as to expence of conqueſt, equal to their value and real eſtimation; which, upon the moſt moderate computation, as to reſources of revenue, number of people, and advantage of ſituation, may be higher eſteemed, than all the acquiſitions we gained by thoſe two obſtinate and expenſive wars, for the Spaniſh ſucceſſion at the opening of the preſent century, and that which terminated at Fontainebleau in the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty three, though our arms, in both of them, were attended with the moſt brilliant and amazing ſucceſs. But as we had made, in thoſe two wars, as many great and important conqueſts, as could well be crouded into the number of years they laſted, I leave it

to

to the hiſtorians of future ages to enquire, why we did not draw from them greater advantages.

Inſenſibly, my Lord, I have wandered from the ſubject I firſt ſet out upon and propoſed to entertain you with: but this digreſſion, however long, will ſerve at leaſt to convince your Lordſhip's friends, how greatly the ſtate of the French nation appeared, by its conduct and reſources, to be enfeebled and worn out by the late war, in compariſon to the ſtrength and vigour of the firm and robuſt government of Great Britain; whoſe luxuries and vices have not yet enervated and unſtrung the great principles of its conſtitution.

But ſhould theſe general outlines of the circumſtances of the two nations, during the violent efforts of the late war, have no weight in the opinion of your Lordſhip's friends, to ſhew that France is an exhauſted ſtate, I ſhall, to convince them of it, now enter into a more circumſtantial detail.

Yet to avoid, as much as poſſible, prolixity, and tiring your Lordſhip's patience, I ſhall preſs my matter cloſe; and only give you thoſe remarks in a general way, which your own good ſenſe and knowledge of the ſubject will enable you to draw every neceſſary influenee from. In this, my Lord, I ſhall follow the advice of the immortal author of the Spirit of Laws, who judicioufly ſays, "il s'agir de faire penſer; plutot que de faire lire," an advice, I have often been ſorry, that hath not been followed by the writers of his own nation, who, to my great mortification and loſs of time, have frequently reverſed the wiſe maxim of the great author juſt alluded to.

The landed intereſt being the great fountain and ſource from which the power and opulence of the ſtate, and the ſupport and happineſs of individuals, do, in every wiſe government, ſpring, I will, firſt, my Lord, begin with the preſent ſtate of the agriculture of France.

The

The kingdom of France, my Lord, including the countries annexed to it, during the late and the preſent reigns, contains, according to the moſt exact calculations, about one hundred and forty millions of Engliſh acres, and the number of its inhabitants, according to the famous Marſhal Vauban, are about twenty millions.

The compact ſituation of France; its extent of country; the advantages of its climate; the richneſs of its ſoil, in producing, in ſome of the provinces, ſilk, corn, wine and oil, and almoſt every article to gratify either the neceſſaries or luxuries of life; the beauty and grandeur of all the great roads leading from the moſt diſtant parts of the kingdom to the capital; the advantage of ſo many rivers and canals, formed by nature and art, and particularly that of Languedoc, which is in length an hundred and ſixty Engliſh miles, and lays open a communication between the Mediterranean ſea, and the great weſtern ocean; the ingenuity, induſtry, and ſubordi-

nation

nation of its people ; its vicinity to Spain, and other nations, who, by inland carriage, take off their rich manufactures and other products ; the ſuperior excellence of their ſugar iſlands, which bring them an amazing profit, as they do not conſume a third part of their product themſelves ; the great encouragement given to the arts and ſciences, and even to every trifling profeſſion, that tends to poliſh and refine the exterior appearances of life ; the art of inviting and encouraging the ſubjects of the neighbouring nations into their armies and manufactures, by which their induſtry and number of inhabitants are increaſed ; and, above all, the infatuated fondneſs which all the Courts, as well as people of fortune in Europe, have adopted for the rich manufactures of France, and all the other products of tinſel ſhew and magnificence, for which the French nation have been ſo long famous ; and what hath ſtill turned more to the advantage of France, few foreigners of rank and fortune are content with enjoying the modes and ma-

nufactures of it in their own countries, but do, in ſome part of their lives, pay a viſit to this land of luxury and politeneſs, to taſte its pleaſures and learn its language and manners; nor is the enormous ſum of money, ſpent in France on theſe occaſions, the only advantage the French reap from ſuch viſits; for foreigners acquire there ſuch a fondneſs for the modes, manners and manufactures of that country, that they continue attached to them to the detriment of thoſe in their own nations, for the remaining part of their lives; all theſe advantages, my Lord, are certainly great; and they have been extolled and founded high by the gay and giddy part of the nobility in our own as well as in other neighbouring ſtates; but by none ſo much as the French nation, and the French miniſters themſelves; who, intoxicated with theſe ſuperficial advantages, have neglected thoſe in which their real power and proſperity were more deeply concerned.

Though the extent of country in France, and the number of its people are three times

times as great as in England, yet, I am well convinced, that the annual produce of the landed intereſt in England is vaſtly ſuperior to that of France *; for with all the advantages of ſoil and climate, which they enjoy, their land is not half cultivated; for the follies and vices in their government conſpire together to prevent the progreſs of the landed intereſt.

It is from a want of wiſe maxims and laws, relative to agriculture, that the preſent landed intereſt of France is now ſunk into ſuch a low and conſumptive ſtate: Of what uſe have their numerous armies in time of peace been, but to deſtroy that very power they are ſo ambitious of ſupporting? And though in the laſt, and in the preſent reign, they have added to their monarchy ſome great acquiſitions, yet from the vicious and impolitic rules and

* The annual product of the land in France, is calculated by Vauban Mirabeau, and their ableſt writers, at fifty millions ſterling; that of England alone, ſince our late amazing improvements, is valued at between ſeventy and eighty millions.

methods

methods of their government, which they have eſtabliſhed in thoſe acquiſitions, they have added very little real power to the ſtate.

Unhappily for their neighbours, and the repoſe of Europe, the great object of the ambition of the French miniſters hath always been to extend their territories, and neglect the improvement of the fertile ſoil, they had already in poſſeſſion ; and which, in extent, is ſufficient to ſupport with food, and every neceſſary and luxury of life, more than double the number of their inhabitants. Had they extended their territories ten times as far, and, from a want of judgment and wiſe laws, neglected to procure a proper number of farmers and huſbandmen to cultivate them, whatever reputation it might have given to their armies, which alone they are ambitious of maintaining, it would have added little or nothing to their internal power.

All the arts, ſubtleties, and ſuperior addreſs, even of the miniſters of France,

on which the French have almoſt totally depended for the aggrandizement of their ſtate, cannot, without an induſtrious application to agriculture, procure food for their ſoldiers and people : and the government that neglects this moſt important of all advantages, muſt, whatever ſplendid appearances they may, for a ſhort time, put on and deceive their rivals with, be in poſſeſſion of a power very precarious and unſubſtantial.

The efforts made by the great *Sully*, to cultivate and improve the landed intereſt of France, was attended with ſuch ſucceſs in his own time, and was in ſo flouriſhing a ſtate, relative to the then neglected condition of our own, and other countries, that when Colbert, a little more than a century ago, was called into adminiſtration, the French ſupplied with corn, not only our own, but all the other markets in Europe.

But Colbert, not content with this great and permanent advantage, determined, in compliance with the vanity and oſtenta-

tion

tion of his ambitious ſovereign, to build the future power and glory of France on an encouragement of the fine arts, an eſtabliſhment of ſumptuous and coſtly manufactures, and all thoſe other objects of taſte and refinement, that are moſt ſubſervient to pomp and luxury ; and this, with a deſign to lay all the courts of Europe under a contribution to his own.

The nature, principles, and benefits of commerce, being not at that time ſo well underſtood as at preſent, his plan appeared to ſuperficial capacities, both plauſible and wiſe : but to ſupport this expenſive new-adopted ſyſtem, and bring it to perfection, he, for the ſake of encouraging theſe manufactures in their infant-ſtate, was reduced to the neceſſity of loading, by heavy and arbitrary taxes, the landed intereſt.

The errors of great men are, in affairs of government, much more fatal in their conſequences than thoſe of an inferior capacity ; thus Colbert, to encourage thoſe

manufactures, upon which he hoped to build his future fame with poſterity, had recourſe to another operation, the moſt wild and extravagant that ever entered the head of a great ſtateſman; well knowing, that the price of manufactures will ever depend upon the price of labour, and the price of labour upon the plenty or ſcarceneſs of bread and other food, he erroneouſly concluded, that by entirely prohibiting the exportation of corn, it could not fail, in the event, to render it more abundant and cheaper in the market; and by this means, that the manufacturer would be enabled to afford his induſtry at ſo moderate a price, as not to be equalled by their rivals in trade; but by this falſe concluſion, he brought on a decline of the agriculture of France, and by his ſucceſſors in power following the ſame miſtaken conduct, the landed intereſt of France hath been thrown into ſuch a languiſhing ſtate, as the abilities of the greateſt miniſters may never recover it out of.

Whilſt

Whilſt the progreſs that agriculture hath made in England, ſince that time, and particularly ſince the law for allowing a bounty on the exportation of corn, is amazing; and is entirely owing to the miſtaken conduct of our rivals on this important object.

Since the ruin of the landed intereſt in France, their miniſters, when alarmed with a great ſcarcity of corn, and danger of a famine, have had no other reſource, than, at the expence of government, to ſupply their magazines and public granaries from England, or ſome other country, rich with the products of agriculture, and retailing it again at a moderate price to their ſtarving people.

Our own nation, my Lord, happier in its opinions and operations on this moſt important of all objects of government, hath, without public granaries, or any ſuch trifling and ſuperficial reſources, diſcovered, upon the ſurface of the earth, mines of more real wealth and value, than the precious metals that lie concealed in its

its bowels; which, beſides feeding our own inhabitants, and diffuſing plenty and opulence through all ranks of our people, does not fail to keep the proud lords and proprietors of thoſe mines, as well as our vain and haughty rivals, the French, in a ſtate of dependance upon us for their very ſupport and exiſtence.

England, my Lord, is the only ſtate, either antient or modern, that hath made wiſe laws and regulations for the increaſe and improvement of the landed intereſt: and experience hath ſhewn, that ſcarcity and famine have much more frequently happened in thoſe countries, where the greateſt precautions have been taken to guard againſt them, than in our own, where we even allow a bounty to our merchants to encourage them to export that very article of life, which is ſo neceſſary for ſupporting the exiſtence of our own people; a meaſure the moſt bold and intrepid that ever yet entered into the mind of a legiſlator, and which, at firſt, ſo ſtaggered and ſurpaſſed the limited conceptions

tions of our rivals, that nothing but the amazing advantages, which have reſulted from it to this kingdom, could have convinced them of its wiſdom and utility.

Since the paſſing of that wiſe law for allowing a bounty upon the exportation of corn, and the farmers, from the happy effects of it, have been enabled to underſell other nations in foreign markets, when our own have been overſtocked, our landed intereſt, and our national ſtrength have increaſed to a degree unknown to any other country but our own.

This exportation of corn hath been ſo far from raiſing the price of it at home, as ſome people at firſt erroneouſly imagined, that it hath both augmented its quantity, and lowered its price, as may be ſeen by conſulting the regiſter of the price of corn for the laſt eighty years.

Happily for England, the effects of this bounty upon the exportation of corn, hath produced an increaſe of it, even more than equal to the increaſe of our national riches; and had it not produced that effect,

fect, the conſequences of thoſe riches, by increaſing the prices of the neceſſaries of life, would have been more ſeverely felt, and more loudly complained of, even than they have been; for the price of the neceſſaries of life, as well as of the luxuries of it, will always be in proportion, and relative to the quantity of money, whether paper or coin, that circulates in a nation. When the productions of nature are, in any country, great and abundant, and money in that country is little and ſcarce, much of the former may be bought for a ſmall quantity of the latter; but when the money of a kingdom ſhall be plenty, either from a diſcovery of mines, or a large quantity of paper-money, which anſwers the ſame end as gold, ſhall ſuddenly be brought into circulation, as is the caſe in England, it is obvious to common ſenſe, without the aid of political arithmetick, that a larger quantity of money muſt be employed to purchaſe the wants and neceſſaries of life, than when there was but a little caſh in the king-

kingdom; and this increaſed ſtate of the national riches in England, is, undoubtedly, the principal cauſe of the complaints of the common people, that every thing is grown ſo exceſſively dear.

The great trade which England hath long been in poſſeſſion of, from the exportation of its corn, and the great balance it hath received in conſequence thereof, was the reaſon that the ſcarcity of the harveſts, which hath, of late years, been general in all the countries of Europe, was more ſenſibly felt by the people of England, than by thoſe nations, who are more accuſtomed to ſuch ſcarcity, and have not had the advantage of a foreign exportation.

However, during the laſt four years in France, the ſcarcity of corn hath been a very ſerious and alarming circumſtance; for their crops having fallen ſhorter than uſual, and all other nations being unable to ſupply their wants, it did not fail to produce great anxiety and ſolicitude amongſt the higher ranks of people, and

too often a ſtate of riot and confuſion amongſt the lower.

The harveſt of the preſent year hath been very favourable, and from the reports of thoſe who have been employed by government to enquire into its productions, it is believed, there will be nearly ſufficient for their annual conſumption; for even France, my Lord, with all its advantages of ſoil and climate, and the full enjoyment of the trade of their coſtly and ſumptuous manufactures, hath, amongſt other nations, been laid under contribution to us, and in the midſt of all her ſeeming grandeur, hath, within the laſt fourſcore years, paid us near two hundred millions of livres of their money, which is a ballance of more than a hundred thouſand pounds ſterling a year. But this ſum, your Lordſhip's friends will, with ſome appearance of truth, ſay, is but trifling, when compared to the enormous ſums we have paid the French for their wines, their baubles, and their rich manufactures of every kind.

But the ſpecific ſum, acquired by the balance

balance of trade, is not, as your Lordſhip well knows, of ſo much conſequence to the power of a ſtate, as the number of people, and the number of ſhips, it hath employed, and given a ſupport to; a few bales of the rich manufactures of Lyons, might have produced to the French a more conſiderable ſum than this balance of our corn trade; but he would be but ſuperficially acquainted with the true advantages of trade, who ſhould conclude, it was a matter of indifference to a government, or to a people, how the balance was produced.

The advantages ariſing from the landed intereſt, as I have before ſaid, are more ſolid and permanent, and in which not only our ſupport, but our very exiſtence is immediately concerned; whilſt thoſe, ariſing from manufactures, eſpecially ſuch as are ſubſervient to luxury and oſtentation, depend only upon the folly, the caprice, and the mode of the times; and they too are eaſily imitated by other nations; and however infatuated the nobility of our own country have been to the

ſplendid manufactures of France, the preſent taſte and elegance of thoſe now produced by your own rich fabricks of ſilks and velvets in England, are, I am convinced, by ſome patterns I have lately ſeen here, equal in beauty, and ſuperior in quality to thoſe of Lyons: and as other nations have alſo imitated them with good ſucceſs, the ſuperb city of Lyons, in which the famous Colbert had placed his future fame, hath, within my own memory, like the ſtate of France itſelf, been ſinking and declining ſo very faſt, that now it manufactures little more than is conſumed by the French themſelves.

The proud city of Lyons, which hath long made ſo great a figure in trade and commerce, will, it is more than probable, ſoon experience the ſame fate, as the once opulent city of Sevile hath met with; which, though now ſunk from the vices of the Spaniſh government, into a ſtate of poverty, had, but a century and half ago, according to Don Jeronomo d'Uztariz, a writer of great reputation, within its walls, not leſs than eight thouſand looms,

looms, conſtantly employed in her coſtly rich manufactures, with which ſhe ſupplied all the nations in Europe; and however formal and pedantic the preſent Spaniſh dreſs may appear in the eyes of refined moderns, Spain was at that time, in its dreſs, as well as its language and manners, the model for all the courts of Europe.

France, about the beginning of the laſt reign, ſucceeded Spain in theſe great advantages; and with them hath long carried her head aloft, and over-awed her neighbours; but as national modes are always taken from thoſe ſtates who take the lead in power, even the haughty court of France hath, ſince the laſt peace, laid down its antient pride and inſolence to adopt our language, our modes, and our dreſs, though not our laws, and wiſe maxims of government.

Whatever, my Lord, may have been the fluctuating ſtate of power in other countries, yet as England is the only nation, either ancient or modern, that hath fixed the baſis of her power upon the landed intereſt,

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it may be truly ſaid, ſhe hath laid the foundation of her power upon a rock. And from the natural advantages of its inſular ſituation, its happy form of government, its wiſe body of laws, a marine that in power far ſurpaſſes any the world ever ſaw, and an extenſive and uſeful commerce, not confined only to thoſe objects that depend upon the changeable follies and caprices of mankind, but to thoſe alſo of food and warm cloathing, which are the univerſal want of all nations; tho' none but our own, from the quantity of corn and wool it produces, is able to ſupply them. From all theſe advantages, that we enjoy independent of and ſuperior to every other nation, I ſhall not, I hope, incur the cenſure of any national partiality from your Lordſhip's friends, in declaring, that the power and opulence of the Engliſh nation are fixed upon a rock that will be as durable as time itſelf; and not ſubject to decay and periſh like that of the Spaniſh and French nations; which were rapid in their riſe and decline of greatneſs; and who, after having ſhone with

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ſplendor and figured it awhile in the eyes of their neighbours, are now almoſt dwindled, " like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion," into nothing.

At leaſt, my Lord, we are convinced from the experience of the late war, that the foundation of our government is not to be ſhook by the confederated power of the feeble, though in appearance formidable, *pacte de famille:* and if ever we ſhould fall into thoſe ruins, which ſo many other nations have experienced, it muſt alone be produced by our own internal diſſentions, our own wanton folly and madneſs.

The power and ſtrength of all political ſocieties depending entirely upon the laws and maxims of their governments, it cannot be wondered at, that France ſhould have long been in a declining ſtate; for her miniſters have attempted to raiſe a magnificent ſtructure without the materials of the earth entering into the compoſition of it: the ſandy foundation upon which it is built, hath been long evident from the dangers of famine to which their people,

people, during the laſt century, have been ſo often expoſed.

Since the time that Colbert's favourite ſyſtem was adopted, of raiſing the national power by the precarious riches ariſing from the trade and commerce of manufactures only, their landed intereſt has been in a declining ſtate; and ſo infatuated was that great man to this commercial idea, that he would, with pleaſure, have ſeen all the labouring people in the country changed into artiſts and manufacturers ‖. And, indeed, he laid upon thoſe employed in the uſeful branches of agriculture ſuch great and oppreſſive taxes, as ſoon compelled them to forſake a profeſſion where they found it impoſſible, with the utmoſt efforts of induſtry, to procure a comfortable ſubſiſtence. Since that time more than two-fifths of the country-people of

‖ A certain Engliſh ambaſſador at the court of France, upon viſiting the famous manufacture of the Goblin's in Paris, was aſked with a vanity peculiar to that nation, how he approved of the elegance of their tapeſtry? To which he ſhrewdly replied, that Colbert, to conſole the people for want of bread, had at leaſt feaſted their eyes and their imaginations.

France

France have, by the moſt moderate calculation, reſided in the towns and cities: and this removal was perfectly agreeable to his wiſhes, not doubting, but the aſſembling great numbers of people together, would be of the greateſt national advantage, by giving them imaginary wants, which, without the ſhew and diſplay of vanity and ambition, they never would have had, by living unconnected in the ſobriety of a country life.

Though the riches of a ſtate may depend upon the induſtry of its people, yet they do not leſs depend upon wiſe laws in dividing the inhabitants into ſuch claſſes as are moſt proper and neceſſary for ſupplying the wants and neceſſities of mankind: and though a manufacturer in France may procure, by his induſtry, a more eaſy and comfortable living for himſelf, than a huſbandman employed in the toils of agriculture, yet the advantages ariſing from the latter, are infinitely more ſerviceable to the ſtate; as he, by his induſtry, creates a value that did not before

ſubſiſt, and which is immediately relative to the ſupport and exiſtence of ſociety: and every nation, who, like the French, do not take care that their people may have a ſufficiency of bread, and the firſt neceſſaries of life, muſt always be in poſſeſſion of a power that is weak and precarious. The proportion of the number of people in France, employed in their different manufactures, is, when compared to thoſe employed in agriculture, and the numberleſs branches of induſtry relative to it, vaſtly unequal: but the arbitrary and oppreſſive taxes which the labouring people are expoſed to, drive them from the cultivation of the land, to ſeek for a more eaſy and comfortable ſubſiſtence in thoſe profeſſions, which, ſo far from being uſeful and advantageous to the ſtate, are a great expence and burthen to it.

The army, the church, the great body of the law, and its numerous dependants, the collecting the taxes, and the ſwarms of people employed in the king's farms of

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the public revenues, drain the villages of almoſt one third part of their uſeful labourers.

Refined as the French nation is in all the ſuperficial and exterior appearances and accompliſhments of life, one cannot, without aſtoniſhment, look into all the abſurdities and abuſes of their form of government, and the unprofitable manner of employing their people.

But of all their abſurdities, their method of impoſing taxes for the ſervice of the ſtate, is the moſt abſurd; for thoſe, whom they ought in good policy to tax, are exempted from taxation; and thoſe, who ſhould be exempted from taxes, are moſt grievouſly burthened with them.

In France, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, all the great proprietors of land, and every perſon holding any ſort of employment under the ſtate, are exempted from the taille, or the land-tax, whilſt the inferior ranks of freeholders, and all the lower and ſubordinate claſſes of people, who, in common policy, ought as

much as poſſible to be ſpared, are oppreſſed by it in the moſt inhuman manner: even the day-labourers, who are not poſſeſſed of land, have a tax upon their induſtry, in proportion to what it is ſuppoſed they may, by the ſweat of their brows, acquire: and it is a fundamental principle of the French government, that the lower claſſes of people muſt be kept poor, to ſecure their obedience to the ſtate, and to force them to hard labour. This doctrine, however right and eaſy it may appear to miniſters pampered with all the delicacies of life, is certainly carried to extremes, very inconſiſtent with true policy and the real intereſt of the ſtate: for the peaſants and labouring people, are, from their conſtant fatigues, and want of proper food to recruit their ſtrength, exhauſted and worn out, even before the age of fifty: the robuſt and full-fed people, who labour at the plough in England, would hear with aſtoniſhment, that the ſame claſſes of people in France, never taſte any other reward for the ſweat

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of their brows, and the curſe of their exiſtence, than a ſcanty ſupport of bread, and water, and roots.

Under oppreſſions like theſe, it is not much to be wondered at, that the peaſants fly from the toils of agriculture to ſeek refuge in the towns, the army, or any other employments where a better ſupport may be more eaſily obtained: and was there not ſuch a ſtrong and ſtrict barrier, placed at all the frontier towns of the whole kingdom, to prevent any labouring people from paſſing, without giving ſecurity for their return, it is more than probable, that the French nation would be very ſoon deſerted by all that claſs of people; who, properly employed and treated, conſtitute the real riches of a ſtate.

In deſpotic governments, the abſolute power of the ſovereign is delegated to all perſons who are employed under the crown: and in France each province hath its tyrant, under the title of Intendant: to him an abſolute power is given to govern its interior ſtate, and to levy the taille,

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the capitation, and ſuch other taxes as are not included in the general farms. And in each pariſh, this deſpotic intendant hath a deſpotic ſub-delegate, who, being acquainted with the fortunes and properties of his fellow pariſhioners, hath an abſolute power to draw from them, not a certain and fixed rate in proportion to their ſeveral properties, but ſuch ſum as he ſhall be pleaſed to think they can, that year, ſpare for the ſervice of the king; and the people think themſelves happy, when this ſum does not exceed eight ſhillings in the pound of their annual revenue, whether ſuch revenue ariſes from property, or the effects of induſtry; and if the following year, the people ſhould, by plentiful harveſts, the efforts of induſtry, or any other favourable circumſtances, improve their properties, ſtill the king's collector hath a diſcretionary power to draw from them ſuch a proportionate ſum of that encreaſe as he ſhall judge neceſſary for the ſervice of the king.

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This arbitrary and oppreſſive tax, which the French call the taile, had its origin in the feudal laws, and was a tax paid by the vaſſals in lieu of military ſervice; and as the idea of vaſſalage and contempt is, by the ſuperior claſſes of people, ſtill annexed to thoſe who pay it; and as every employment under the king, however ſubordinate it may be, gives an exemption from it, it is the object of every man's endeavours to get clear of what is ſo oppreſſive and contemptible.

The many fatal effects of this abſurd tax, ſo flattering to thoſe born in the rank of gentlemen, and ſo degrading and oppreſſive to thoſe who pay it, have been long perceived by ſome of their wiſeſt miniſters; and more than once it hath been propoſed to aboliſh it, and inſtead thereof to inſtitute a land-tax of ſo many ſhillings in the pound, upon an eſtimate of the value of all the lands in the kingdom; and this tax not to be diſcretionary and in the power of the intendant to encreaſe or diminiſh, as his caprice or intereſt might di-

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rect, but to be at a determined and fixed rate in proportion to the value of the lands.

But many objections more plauſible, than juſt, have always been made to this equitable propoſal: the advocates for the continuance of the taille, under its preſent oppreſſive mode, aſſert, that from its long exiſtence, it is become familiar and habitual; and it is ſo interwoven with all the great principles of their government, that it cannot be now ſeparated without new modeling the whole ſtate; that the privileges of the nobility, gentry, and thoſe who enjoy an exemption from it, are, by length of time, ſo confirmed, that they would eſteem it as the greateſt injury imaginable, to be taxed under the ſame mode and form with the lower claſſes of people; that it would break down and deſtroy thoſe diſtinctions of rank, which have exiſted ever ſince the beginning of the monarchy, and have added ſo much to the ſplendor of the crown; and that in abſolute governments, the lower claſſes of people muſt be kept

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in a ſtate of indigence to force them to hard labour, and compel them to a due ſtate of ſubjection to their governors and ſuperiors.

Many other ſpecious reaſons, equally weak and ridiculous, as thoſe before aſſigned, have been given in ſupport and maintenance of this abſurd and oppreſſive tax; but the true reaſon of its continuance, and why it will probably ever be continued, is the powerful influence, that the nobility, the clergy, and the great proprietors of land have in the affairs of government, and the particular advantages they enjoy by an exemption from it.

The nation who hath adopted principles of government like theſe, ſo repugnant to its landed intereſt, and who hold it as a maxim of policy to keep the lower ranks of their people in a ſtate of poverty, can never be a formidable rival, either in time of peace or war, to a nation like England: and the French, notwithſtanding all their encouragements given to the cultivation of the arts and ſciences, and all the refinements of the pleaſures and

luxuries of life, are yet in a ſtate of Gothick ignorance of that eſſential knowledge, which moſt contributes to the power and riches of a ſtate, and to the proſperity and happineſs of a people *.

The miniſters of France have been ſo far from improving and cultivating their landed intereſt, as common policy would direct, that they have always thought the power of a ſtate depended alone upon the ſtrength of formidable armies: and their vanity to take the lead in all the important affairs of Europe, and their propenſity to quarrel with their neighbours, have been the cauſe of their keeping up and ſupporting more numerous armies, than have been either conſiſtent with their revenues, or real neceſſity: the old peace-eſtabliſhment for the army of France was, till within theſe few years paſt, never leſs than

* The immortal Monteſquieu has wiſely obſerved; pour l'etat monarchique ſe ſoûtienne, le luxe doit aller en croiſſant, du laboreur à l'artiſan, au negociant, aux nobles, aux magiſtrats, aux grand ſeigneurs, aux traitans principaux, aux princes, ſans quoi tout ſeroit perdu.

two hundred thouſand men: but the enormous expence of it being of late more ſenſibly felt by the government than ever, it was, after the late peace, to the ſurpriſe and chagrin of all the old advocates for military power and grandeur, reduced ſo low as an hundred and twenty thouſand men; and which is a number ſurely more than doubly ſufficient to garriſon all their frontier towns in time of peace.

The great degree of honour that is annexed to the military profeſſion in France, and the deſire of avoiding every imputation of a want of perſonal courage, are the motives which engage the nobility and gentlemen of all ranks to ſerve the King in the army, almoſt at their own expence; for the pecuniary appointments in the ſervice are very unequal to the great expences of it: for all the officers, who are of opulent fortunes, go forth to war with ſo much pomp and ſplendor, and ſuch an extravagant number of ſervants and horſes, that they expoſe themſelves, with great juſtice, to the ridicule of their enemies, who cannot ſee the uſe or benefit of ſo much

ſplendor and magnificence in a profeſſion where they are very little wanted, and ought to be but little encouraged.

It hath been thought, by ſuperficial people, a profound policy in the French government, to animate their troops to ſerve from a motive of honour, rather than a pecuniary reward; but this is not the only inſtance where the meaſures of the French government are plauſible and advantageous in appearance, but yet produce very different and contrary effects: for troops muſt be properly ſupported, or they will never do their duty; and the daily pay of a French ſoldier, being only five ſols, or two pence half-penny Engliſh, it is not ſufficient to ſupply the wants of nature; and therefore the reſt muſt be, ſome way or other, got from government, or from the induſtry of the labouring people: for he who ſuppoſes that a French army of an hundred thouſand men are maintained at a leſs expence to their government, than the ſame number of Engliſh troops, conſiders the ſubject par-

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tially, and as only relative to their pay, and without knowing the privileges, indulgencies, and exemptions, which are granted to the military profeſſion in France, and which fall heavy upon the people.

Beſides, for want of annual cloathing, and a proper healthy food to ſupport the troops under the fatigues of war, the French hoſpitals ſoon become crowded with ſick and diſabled men, in a proportion of more than two to one, when the armies of both nations are equal in numbers; and few men but know, that a ſick ſoldier in the hoſpital is of double expence to government to one that is in health, and able to do his duty.

The enormous expence of the French military hoſpitals, during the late war, and of all their other contracts, both for the army and navy, when compared to our own, ſurpaſſes all belief; that ſome few of our own contractors accumulated great fortunes, is well known; but what even thoſe few men got, may be ſaid to be nothing at all, when compared to the immenſe

immenſe fortunes, acquired by the French entrepreneurs; nor is it to be wondered at; for if men of high rank in the adminiſtration of affairs in France, will ſuffer their favourites and relations to require and accept of great conſiderations for obtaining lucrative bargains from the contractors of every ſpecies, it is not to be wondered at that ſuch contractors ſhould take every advantage of repaying themſelves by plundering the ſtate, when they can do ſo with great eaſe, and the utmoſt ſafety? For all theſe contracts being made under the authority of the ſovereign, no perſon whoever, dares to complain of their abuſe.

In compliance with the national vanity and natural foibles of the French, the nobility and gentry in France, do, it muſt be acknowledged, ruin their fortunes in the army with great chearfulneſs and alacrity; and in return for doing ſo, and the dangers they have undergone, every officer who hath ſerved twenty years without reproach, is intitled to the military

order

order of St. Louis: and however trifling this bauble may appear in the eyes of the ſober thinking people of other nations, the value of it is, by the arts of the miniſters, kept up ſo high in France, that few gentlemen of fortune in that kingdom engage in the ſervice with any other motive, than that of obtaining this badge of honour; and which, to animate their troops during the laſt war, was ſo profuſely given away by the court, that now the number of that order exceeds nine thouſand; for the officers of the navy, as well as thoſe of the army, are equally entitled to it.

No ſooner is this badge of honour obtained by officers, who are a little independent in their fortunes, than they retire from the ſervice to enjoy their laurels in the circle of their friends and acquaintances: and this vanity, connected with many other follies of the military government in France, is the principal cauſe, that their officers are but little acquainted with the grounds and principles of the art

of war, in compariſon to their rivals, where men enter the army, as a profeſſion for life, and propoſe, by acquiring a thorough knowledge of their employments, to advance their future fortunes; a motive, which, of all others would appear the moſt unworthy to an officer in France, who ruins his fortune in the ſervice, and in doing ſo contributes to the ruin of the ſtate, only from the ridiculous motives of vanity, which cuſtom hath eſtabliſhed in that kingdom.

The immenſe expence to government, in ſupporting ſuch a numerous army in time of peace, is not the only bad effect it produces to the ſtate; for the ſuperior degree of honour and reſpect, which every military man in France is intitled to, intoxicates all ranks of people, and makes them deſirous of embracing a military life; and which, not being an employment in France, either favourable to the morals, or the virtues of uſeful ſober citizens, they contract thereby ſuch habits of gallantry and diſſipation, as are very incon-

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ſiſtent with the ſtations and characters of diſcreet country-gentlemen and ſober farmers; in which capacities they would, by cultivating their lands and improving their paternal eſtates, be of infinitely more ſervice to their country. Beſides, all their common ſoldiers, being drawn from the great corps of huſbandmen, are, from an abſurd cuſtom, not eaſily reconciled to common ſenſe, inliſted to ſerve the king only for ſix years, which occaſions a conſtant circulation of debauching * and ruining the morals and induſtry of the lower ranks of people; who, by living that time in indolence and lazineſs, contract ſuch habits as render them afterwards very unfit for the labour and fatigues of agriculture.

It is but juſtice to own, that the French are more free from the effects of religious

* A French peaſant, that has been a ſoldier, when again he returns to live in his own village, then becomes a bully, a bravo, and a bad member of ſociety: and the French king looſes more of this claſs of his ſubjects by the ſword, in one week, for they too are men of honor, than are hung up at Tyburn in one year.

ſuperſtition, than thoſe of any other Roman Catholick country in Europe; yet this does not proceed from a want of eccleſiaſtics to fill their minds with prejudices, but from their national levity: for though all the uſeleſs profeſſions in France are abundantly ſtored with people, yet, the eccleſiaſtic profeſſion, by far ſurpaſſes that of every other in number: for the younger ſons of gentlemen embrace an eccleſiaſtic life, to enjoy in profuſion and luxury the church-livings; and the lower claſſes of people enter into it from a motive of lazineſs, and as an exemption from the toils and fatigues of a laborious life.

According to the moſt moderate calculation, there are in France no leſs than five hundred thouſand of its ſubjects, of both ſexes, conſtantly devoted to a life of religion and lazineſs; who contribute nothing, either by their induſtry or population, to the benefit of ſociety: the annual revenues of the church-lands, and thoſe belonging to convents and religious ſocieties, do, by a late eſtimate, amount

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to eight millions ſterling a year; and had not a law been made ſome years ago, to prevent eccleſiaſtics from either purchaſing of more lands, or receiving from the weak and ſuperſtitious part of the people, legacies to the church, the prieſts and clergy would, by their pious frauds, have ſoon been in poſſeſſion of three fourths of the lands and riches of the whole kingdom.

The church-lands, and the property in general of the clergy, being exempted from the greateſt part of the taxes and burthens of the people, it is no wonder that ſuch a collective body of men ſhould be very opulent and rich: but the riches of the clergy in France, like thoſe of the nation in general, are moſt partially and unequally divided. If the annual revenues of the church, which amount to eight millions ſterling, were equally divided amongſt five hundred thouſand people, of which number the eccleſiaſtic community conſiſts, it would bring to each the ſum of ſixteen pounds ſterling a year,

which would be ſufficient, at leaſt, to procure them all the wants and neceſſaries of life; but in the great body of the clergy, there are no leſs than an hundred and thirty one archbiſhops and biſhops, who, together with thoſe of other ſuperior orders in the church, enjoy enormous revenues; whilſt all in the lower and ſubordinate claſſes, live in a ſtate of want and indigence, derogatory to the character of clergymen, and do, with difficulty, procure the common neceſſaries of life; whilſt thoſe of the higher orders are pampered with all the luxuries and delicacies of it, and exceed all other ranks of men in the kingdom in ſplendor, profuſion, and extravagance.

It hath long been the object of the French government, to prevail upon their clergy to ſubmit to the ſame modes and forms of taxation with the other ſubjects of the ſtate; but, from the ſecret and powerful influence they have ever had at court, that great political object hath never yet been accompliſhed: the clergy,

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from the great power and riches they poſſeſs, conſider themſelves as *imperium in imperio*, and do, in their general aſſemblies, impoſe upon their own body ſuch taxes, and ſuch ſums, as they themſelves think requiſite, out of their own revenues, to ſupport the king's government: when this ſum is thought by the miniſters of ſtate not equivalent to their poſſeſſions, they, to demonſtrate their pretended zeal for the ſtate, and avoid thoſe contentions which might prove dangerous to their power, politically ſupply the reſt by what they call a *free gift* *.

The exeſſive riches which are enjoyed by the higher ranks of the clergy, and the vaſt number of people in the lower claſſes

* It has often been propoſed by the parliaments, to reform and diminiſh the enormous power and riches of the clergy; but the hiſtory of all nations, particularly thoſe of the roman catholick religion, having furniſhed inſtances of the danger of attacking even the abuſes of the church, the court have rather ſubmitted to them, than inflame the ſanguinary enthuſiaſtick zeal of their Ravilliac's, their Clement's, or their Damien's.

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that are ſupported in a ſtate of indolence and idleneſs, are equally prejudicial to both population, and the progreſs of the landed intereſt; for the clergy, not being permitted to marry, are not ſo much intereſted to cultivate thoſe immenſe quanties of lands they are proprietors of, as if thoſe lands were in the poſſeſſion of private citizens, who would, from paternal affection, exert their induſtry to provide for their poſterity.

Of all the abſurdities and follies in the French government, none have been the object of ſo much public clamour and diſcontent amongſt the people, as the impolitic and oppreſſive mode of levying and collecting their taxes and public revenues: the cuſtoms, the exciſe, and many other branches of the public revenue are farmed out to a ſociety of ſixty men of the greateſt monied intereſt in the kingdom. This contract is renewable every ſix years; and the preſent farmers pay to the king one hundred and thirty-two millions of livres, or ſix millions ſterling a year, for the

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privilege of plundering the ſtate: the only advantage to the government attending the preſent mode of collecting theſe taxes, is, that the farmers or financiers advance to the king the annual produce of the farms before they are collected: but the perpetual ſtate of indigence and want, which the government is in for money, is alone ſufficient, one ſhould think, for aboliſhing the continuance of a mode ſo pregnant with evils to the ſtate, and oppreſſions to the people.

The collecting of the cuſtoms and exciſe in England, and the other branches of its revenues, which correſpond to thoſe articles included in the farms of the French king, coſt the Engliſh government, according to a moderate computation, about ten or twelve per cent. upon the ſum collected: but it hath been demonſtrated, to the conviction of every unprejudiced man in France, that though the King receives from his farmers only ſix millions ſterling a year, yet, by the amazing abuſes and enormous profits of the farmers, the

people

people are charged with, and pay more than double that ſum*: beſides a loſs to the ſtate, in employing more than an hundred thouſand of its labouring people in the ſubordinate ranks of cuſtom-houſe officers and ſpies; who, from the virulence of the exciſe laws, and from a want of ſome judicious reſtraint or limitation, fret and teize the uſeful but unhappy people, with-

* A kind of political phrenzy ſeized the people in Paris, in the year 1764, to enquire into the abuſes of the public revenues; and many ſenſible performances at that time were publiſhed, very little favorable, either to the integrity or abilities of the miniſters. Amongſt others, was a work intitled, L'Anti-Financier, which demonſtrates, that the branch of the revenue, called, Les Aides, or Exciſe upon Strong Liquors, not even 20 per cent. of what was raiſed upon the people, came into the king's coffers: theſe enquiries were ſo very painful to the miniſters, that they choſe to thunder out an ordonance, to forbid, under pain of the king's diſpleaſure, any body, for the future, to comment upon thoſe ſubjects which alone were cognizable by the king and his miniſters: it is certain, no abſurdity can equal the impolitick manner the French raiſe their revenues, but the profuſe manner in which they ſquander them away.

out mercy; and which the unfeeling farmers totally diſregard.

In a government but deſirous of ſhewing even the appearances of juſtice to its people, the great abuſes and heavy oppreſſions, which are daily practiſed in this department, could not a moment ſubſiſt, if the *great officers* of the ſtate were not *themſelves* deeply intereſted with the farmers in the contract. It is well known, that no perſon had ſo great a ſhare in theſe profits, as the favourite Sultana, the late Madame de Pompadour; whoſe immenſe riches were acquired by being concerned in every tranſaction of government where money was to be got: and for the better accommodation of her paſſion for money, the late comptroller-general of the finances was raiſed to that important truſt by her favour and protection only; that ſhe might have every poſſible opportunity of gratifying her inſatiable deſire of riches.

He, in return, proved to her an obedient ſervant and a faithful friend, by obſequiouſly conniving at her tools and de-

pendants, buying up clandeſtinely the outſtanding debts of the ſtate, when fallen in the market to fifty per cent. below par, and then paying them at the treaſury, when in her poſſeſſion, at their original value: by ſuch lucrative tranſactions as theſe, ſhe, at her death, had amaſſed more riches than were in the poſſeſſion of any other ſubject in Europe *.

Since the preſent mode of farming out the publick revenues was eſtabliſhed in France, all the great monied men in the nation have turned their thoughts from trade and agriculture, the only ſources of wealth to a ſtate, to employ their fortunes in the money tranſactions of government; and from the conſtant diſtreſſes of the king, the financiers, or monied men, enjoy alone the ſmiles and favours of the

* This enormous fortune, thus acquired by rapine and extortion, ſhe left to her brother the Marquis de Marigini; who, though born only in the rank of *Bourgeois*, was, by the influence of his ſiſter, decorated with the *Cordon Blues*, though expreſsly againſt the rules of that order, which requires the proof of ſix generations of nobility.

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court, whilſt the landed intereſt is in ſo declining a ſituation, that the beſt eſtates are ſold with difficulty, at twenty years purchaſe; and by a policy, not to be reconciled to common ſenſe, the huſbandmen, the labouring people, and every profeſſion that contributes moſt to induſtry, population, and the real riches of a ſtate, are oppreſſed and looked upon with contempt; and ſuch things only encouraged, as are relative to ſhew, pomp and magnificence.

However neceſſary it may be, that the government and court of France ſhould be ſupported with ſplendor and magnificence, the effects of it, it is certain, have been ſo univerſally ſpread, as to intoxicate the whole nation with the thoughts of nothing elſe but pomp and pageantry: the evil of this profuſion and extravagance, is not ſolely confined to the king's houſhold, though it is there moſt ſcandalouſly great; for in that department alone, a ſum, more than equal to the amount of the land-tax of all England, when at three

ſhillings in the pound, is ſquandered away; and it hath, more than once, been the ſubject of remonſtrance from the parliament of Paris to their monarch, who have repeatedly declared, it was not the part of a tender parent, or an affectionate ſovereign, to ſuffer ſuch enormous and uſeleſs profuſion in his houſhold, whilſt the poor induſtrious ſubjects of the interior part of his kingdom were reduced to the moſt deplorable ſtate of miſery, in contributing, by arbitrary oppreſſions, and the want of the very neceſſaries of life, to ſupport that exceſſive ſplendor and extravagance *.

Though

* The firſt act of the preſent comptroller general, on entering the department of the finances, was, reforming the enormous abuſes that prevailed in the king's houſhold (la maiſon du roy) which includes, as in a private family, every branch of his domeſtick expence.

He found upon the liſt of the maſter of horſe, no leſs than twelve hundred horſes, charged to the king, at ſo moderate a price as five ſhillings ſterling a day for the ſupport of each; but only nine hundred of theſe horſes were found to exiſt in reality. In

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Though it may be thought right and neceſſary to ſupport the crown in every monarchy with a becoming magnificence, proportioned to the riches of the country, yet this fondneſs for pomp and ſhew hath been ſo extravagantly purſued in France, that it is the only object of emulation, which prevails amongſt all ranks of the nobility; inſomuch, that even the preſent chief miniſter, with a levity that

the maſter of the great wardrobe's accounts, was annually charged ſix hundred coſtly ſuits of cloaths for the king's uſe, which was thought to be fully ſufficient for a prince, rather modeſt in his dreſs. Indeed, the maſter of the wardrobe, had a very plauſible excuſe to make for this ſeeming profuſion, which was, that ſeveral dependants of the other miniſters, were quartered upon his profits. Not to be prolix, the abuſe of all the ſmaller articles of expence, throughout the whole houſhold, were equally great, for no leſs than eight thouſand pair of gloves were annually charged for the four Meſdames of France, the king's daughters.

This reform and infringement upon the perquiſites of the courtiers, did not fail to raiſe in the palace as great a conſpiracy againſt the new comptroller general of the finances, as if he had been the greateſt enemy of the ſtate.

would

would be more excuſable in a petit maitre, than a great ſtateſman, piques himſelf in ſaying, " that his equipages and liveries are not only more coſtly than the king's, but that his houſhold alſo is ſo numerous, that the ſervants of his ſervants have ſervants to attend them *."

In a nation where ſuch exceſſive luxury as this prevails in all the higher ranks of its people, all the labouring induſtrious poor are kept in the greateſt ſtate of oppreſſion to ſupport it; where commerce, agriculture, and every uſeful profeſſion are held in contempt, and the diſtinction of rank and nobility is the prevailing paſſion; and where the degree of nobleſſe may be purchaſed with a mode-

* The liveries of the ſervants of the miniſter, are, perhaps, more coſtly than the ſenatorial robes of the Engliſh peers. Is it to be wondered at, that in a nation where ſentiments like theſe prevail, the landed intereſt ſhould be lying in ruins: the money which ought to cultivate it, circulates only in canals of luxury; and the villages are drained of its inhabitants, which ought to ſupply the nation with bread and food, to be employed in thoſe offices ſubſervient only to pomp and magnificence.

rate

rate fortune, it is no wonder that trade and agriculture ſhould decreaſe, and the degree of the nobleſſe become numerous.

The government of France hath itſelf greatly encouraged the national vanity of the people in their fondneſs for the rank of nobleſſe, for in an abſolute monarchy, ſuch as France, and where the diſtribution of property and fortune is ſo very unequal, that the people are but one degree removed from all the abſurdities of the feudal laws, vaſt numbers of the nobleſſe muſt have been unavoidably created; but the French government have not been content with ſuch increaſe; for, beſides the antient * hereditary peers of the kingdom, and all the ſubordinate ranks of counts, marquiſes, and the proprietors of lordſhips and manors, who have always been, by their birth, intitled to the privileges of nobleſſe; the government have created a great va-

* The hereditary peers of France, who have ſeats in that aſſembly, are only fifty two in number; but the ſubordinate claſſes of the nobleſſe, exceed, upon a moderate computation, more than ſixty thouſand families.

riety

riety of very unneceſſary civil employments, to which they have annexed the privileges of nobleſſe; and which have been ſold, and made a fatal reſource of revenue, in times when the ſtate hath been in great diſtreſs for money.

That I may as little as poſſible fatigue your Lordſhip's patience with the nature of theſe *charges* or civil employments, which from their number are now become one of the greateſt burthens of the ſtate in France, as well as an abſurd reſource of revenue, happily unknown in England, I will enter into ſuch a detail only, as may convey to your Lordſhip an idea of the impolicy of their inſtitution.

The *charge*, or rank, for example, of one of the king's ſecretaries, and of whom there are more than three hundred, is an employment merely honorary, and hath neither duty nor attendance annexed to it: Theſe *charges* are generally purchaſed by the deſcendants of thoſe, who, by their ſucceſſes in trade or other circumſtances, have acquired fortunes; and who, in compliance

pliance with the national vanity, are deſirous of enjoying, by the privileges of nobleſſe, an exemption from the taille, and from that degree of contempt and oppreſſion, to which they would have been expoſed by continuing in the claſs of *Roturier*, in which they were born.

The purchaſe of this *charge*, or rank of one of the king's ſecretaries, is about five thouſand pounds ſterling; and produces annually to the purchaſer no more than three and a half per cent. for his money; but to this *charge* is annexed honour and reſpect, and it is, like a freehold, hereditary in his family: but however advantageous this mode of borrowing money may appear upon a ſuperficial view, it would not be difficult to demonſtate, that, by the privileges and exemptions annexed to theſe *charges*, and all the collateral diſadvantages attending them, it would have been wiſer in the government, and cheaper, to have paid ten per cent. for the money.

The unequal diſtribution of the lands, and of the riches in general of the French nation muſt, with ſo many other cauſes conſpiring together, keep their agriculture in a miſerable ſtate: the power of the antient republicks, and of every wiſe nation, hath always proceeded from and depended on wiſe and ſolid laws and maxims: none but French miniſters are ſo ignorant as not to know, that ten thouſand acres of land, divided equally amongſt an hundred different people, would not only be better cultivated, and afford ſo many families all the neceſſaries of life, but contribute more to the revenues of the ſtate, than if they were only in the poſſeſſion of one proprietor.

Notwithſtanding the ſplendor of the Court of France, the profuſe way of living amongſt their firſt nobility, and the magnificence which appears in many of the cities and towns, there cannot be a clearer and ſtronger proof of the *radical vices*, and *real poverty of the ſtate*, than thoſe ſwarms of beggars that are every where to be ſeen through-

throughout the kingdom : but the oppreſſions of the labouring people, employed in agriculture, are ſo great from the exceſſive taxes, that they cannot, with the moſt violent efforts of induſtry, procure by it a a tollerable ſupport ; and begging at the gates of the convents and religious houſes, where they diſtribute in alms, what is ſuperfluous to their own wants, is a more beneficial and comfortable profeſſion, than exhauſting their ſtrength in cultivating the ground, the fruits of which are torn from them to pamper in luxury and extravagance the higher ranks of people.

Wiſe laws and wiſe maxims of government can alone contribute to the improvement and encreaſe of the landed intereſt in any country : wherever that important object is properly attended to, there reſults from it, food, cloathing, riches, revenues, commerce, navigation, and every thing that raiſes and creates the real power and grandeur of a nation, and the proſperity und happineſs of its people.

It is now more than a century, that the French nation have neglected and diſregarded the ſtate of their agriculture; and notwithſtanding they have had, during that time, frequent famines, and always a ſcarcity of both corn and wool, they have even flattered themſelves, that the advantages which they reaped in ſupplying all the courts and countries in Europe with their rich manufactures, and other objects of luxury, were more than a balance and equivalent for all ſuch wants and diſadvantages.

Experience hath, however, at laſt convinced them of their impolicy, and of the errors of their national prejudices. They beheld, with ſurprize, the prodigious efforts which England made, during the laſt war, and ſaw, with aſtoniſhment, that ſhe raiſed the ſupplies for the laſt year with the ſame eaſe ſhe had done thoſe for the firſt; whilſt France had exhauſted its ſtrength and its vitals, even in the firſt three years of the war: this could not fail to convince the preſent chief miniſter of

that country, who, though not poſſeſſed of the talents of a great ſtateſman, hath a quickneſs of conception few men are endowed with: he juſtly concluded, that as France had for more than a century ſupplied all the courts of Europe with velvets, lace, brocades, and all the moſt coſtly and expenſive articles of commerce, and yet was inferior to England in national riches, ſtrength and power, that ſuch ſuperiority could alone proceed from the benefits ariſing from the more cultivated ſtate of her landed intereſt.

The French, thus at laſt convinced of the advantages of agriculture, have, within a few years paſt, made every poſſible effort to raiſe their landed intereſt out of that declining condition, in which it hath ſo long lain: and as the example of the ſovereign hath, in France, more influence with the people than the moſt poſitive laws, the king himſelf hath, of late, condeſcended to work at the plough, as an amuſement, in the incloſures at one of his country palaces, and alſo hath lately been

ſeveral

ſeveral times preſent with the firſt nobles of his court, at ſome new experiments relative to agriculture, with the hopes of reviving a profeſſion that tended ſo greatly to the power of his kingdom, and the happineſs of his people.

It is well known, when the ſovereign of France and his court, have adopted either a virtue or a vice, or even a mode of pleaſure, it extends itſelf by degrees to the laſt ranks of the people in the kingdom: but whether the preſent taſte for the pleaſures of farming, adopted by the king, will be attended with that effect, time only can determine. The country gentlemen, however, are ſo ſenſible of its advantages, and the want of improvements, that in more than thirty different provinces, they have formed themſelves into ſocieties to promote the advancement of agriculture; and the beſt books in the Engliſh language on practical farming, have been tranſlated into French, and diſperſed *gratis* by theſe ſocieties to the farmers,

niers, as a guide in the future mode of cultivating their lands.

And ſhould the French miniſtry ſucceed in raiſing their landed intereſt from its preſent low and languiſhing condition, to a ſtate like our own, then indeed, but not till then, the French nation would become a formidable rival to the power of England: but your Lordſhip's own experience will convince you, that all the operations of the French government, are more plauſible in their appearances than profitable in their conſequences. And whilſt ſo many radical vices continue to infect every department of their government, whilſt the clergy are in poſſeſſion of ſo great a ſhare of the landed property of the kingdom, which is exempted from the greateſt part of the taxes raiſed for the ſupport of the ſtate; and whilſt five hundred thouſand people are maintained by that profeſſion in indolence and idleneſs, and who contribute nothing towards induſtry or population; whilſt the pleaſures and luxuries of the court engage a conſtant

ſtant reſidence there of all the firſt nobility; and all the ſecond ranks of people lead a life of pleaſure and diſſipation in the towns; whilſt the huſbandmen, and all the induſtrious labouring people lie under ſo many oppreſſions from partial and arbitrary taxes, and the whole country feel the deepeſt and moſt abject diſtreſs and poverty; whilſt all ranks of people in trade are looked upon, and treated with diſreſpect and contempt, by thoſe who live in a ſtate of eaſe and dependance upon the government; whilſt ſo many *charges*, or civil employments, are to be purchaſed by thoſe who have acquired money in trade, and which give them the privileges of nobleſſe, and an exemption from taxes; whilſt the general ſtate of their commerce and agriculture hath not a tenth part of the money employed in their different branches, as thoſe great cauſes of the power of a ſtate require; whilſt the greateſt number of the people find it more honourable and lucrative to forſake the moſt uſeful employments,

ments, and to enter into the army, the law, the church, and the employments in the finances, all which produce no new encreaſe of power to the ſtate; whilſt the exceſs of luxury continues amongſt the higher ranks of the people, and the labouring poor dare not marry for fear of increaſing their burthens in life; and the people in general aim at nothing more than living ſingle and independent by a life-annuity; whilſt the intereſt of money is kept up ſo high, that it can be applied to more lucrative uſes than either in trade or cultivating the land; whilſt theſe vices and follies, my Lord, continue to exiſt, and all of them are ſo interwoven with the very principles of their government, as hardly to be ſeperated, there is no probability, that the French nation can ever be formidable to England by the progreſs of their landed intereſt.

And now, my Lord, I ſhould proceed to ſpeak of the preſent ſtate of the monied intereſt of France, and of its national debt; but it being rather too large a field

for one letter, and might be too tireſome for your Lordſhip's peruſal, I ſhall reſerve it for the ſubject of my next: yet, as your noble friends have very probably entertained too advantageous notions of the power of France in this reſpect, I ſhall ſo far enter into it, as to afford them ſome idea of it.

The diſcovery of the new world hath produced ſo great a revolution in the maxims of ſtate, and the cuſtoms and manners of the courts of Europe, that their power and grandeur ſeem now to depend chiefly upon commerce and the acquiſition of riches; yet, by a paradox to be reconciled only by the events that have happened, the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, who have been the ſole poſſeſſors of the mines of gold and ſilver, have been, by the fatal poſſeſſion, reduced to a ſtate of indigence and poverty, whilſt the commercial nations, who have acquired theſe precious metals from their proprietors by way of traffick, have, according to the proportion they have gained of them

them, increaſed in their ſtrength and power.

The Engliſh and French nations being not only the two ſtates in Europe, who have drawn the greateſt advantages from the diſcovery of the mines in the new world, but rival powers alſo; and as the riches of a ſtate are now deemed the ſtrength of it, as the one will generally be in proportion to the other, it is of the utmoſt importance for the Engliſh nation to know the real quantity of the riches of its rival, France.

According to the beſt calculations of the quantity of gold and ſilver now circulating, or being in France, it amounts to between ſixty and ſeventy millions ſterling: this ſum, though large, is not ſufficient, from the impolicy of the government, and its unequal diſtribution to ſupport all the luxuries of the nation, to cultivate an extent of land of 140 millions of acres, and to put in motion the induſtry and commerce of twenty millions of inhabitants; nor have the French one

third of a capital employed in their agriculture, or their commerce, that thoſe objects would require to put them on as good a footing as thoſe of England: the induſtry and the progreſs of the power of a nation, depend principally on the riches of it, and of their being properly employed; and however paradoxical it may appear, it might not be difficult to prove, that was the French nation double in extent of land and number of people, without any increaſe of gold and ſilver, it would then be doubly poor and indigent to what it is at preſent: for every acre of land, as well as the induſtry of every individual, requires a certain ſum of money to put it in action, and as the profits ariſing from two hundred pound employed in agriculture or commerce, will be double to thoſe ariſing only from one hundred, ſo the nation that abounds moſt in riches, and employs them on thoſe objects, that produce other riches, that did not before exiſt, will have a power ſuperior to another nation that leſs abounds in money.

ney. By taking the general maſs or ſum total of the riches of a nation, and comparing it with the number of its inhabitants, we ſhall eaſily find, whether the nation hath riches ſufficient to put the induſtry of its people in motion.

On a ſuppoſition therefore that the money circulating, or being in France, amounts to ſixty millions ſterling, and that this ſum was equally divided amongſt twenty millions of people, then each individual would have no more than three pounds to put his induſtry and ingenuity in motion: but this, or even a leſs ſum would be ſufficient for the purpoſe, was France unconnected in every reſpect with other nations, and did not ſo conſtantly contend with, and attempt to rival England both in peace and war; for it is then that our ſuperiority and advantages become ſo evident.

Though the ſum total of the circulating caſh in England, is computed at no more than twenty millions ſterling, yet, by the wiſdom of its government, and its punctuality

tuality in preſerving its publick credit, ſhe hath eſtabliſhed ſuch a reſource of paper-riches, as, in every reſpect, anſwers the ſame end as the metals of gold and ſilver: theſe paper-riches, added to the ſum of its circulating caſh, create a ſum total conſtantly in circulation of one hundred and ſixty millions ſterling; and which, being divided equally amongſt ſix millions of its people, gives to each individual, the ſum of twenty-ſeven pounds to put his induſtry and ingenuity in motion: and this is the principal cauſe of the advantages and the great ſuperiority we enjoy over France as a rival nation.

During the exiſtence of the Miſſiſiippi ſcheme in France, in the years 1718 and 1719, there were more than three hundred millions ſterling of paper-money circulating in that kingdom; and which produced in France the ſame effects for that ſhort time, as our increaſe of riches have produced in England: for there was, during that time, ſuch an induſtry and activity among the people, as was never known

known before in France; lands, that are now ſold for twenty years, were then increaſed to eighty and ninety years purchaſe.

But the foundation of that ſcheme, being neither built upon the principles of wiſdom, nor conducted agreeable to juſtice, its fall was as rapid as its riſe had been: it was a magnificent ſtructure, raiſed upon a ſandy foundation in two years, which would have required two centuries to have brought it by degrees to perfection. The great principles upon which it was attempted, were judicious, and it failed principally through the follies of thoſe who were concerned in it, and the vices inherent in an abſolute government. The national credit of France, received upon that occaſion ſuch a fatal wound, as will ever prevent it from being again a reſource of government: and as it will be impoſſible for France ever to acquire a ſum of gold and ſilver equal to our paper-money, ſhe muſt for ever remain

main in a ſtate of inferiority, when compared to England.

Great as the inconveniences are, which France experiences from the want of a larger ſum of riches in the nation, yet this want is greatly increaſed by the unequal diſtribution of the riches they are in poſſeſſion of; for whilſt ſome few perſons are enormouſly rich, and ſpend their riches in the moſt profuſe luxury, all thoſe profeſſions that are moſt uſeful to the ſtate, have not a tenth part ſufficient to carry on their different employments.

Nothing hath contributed more to exhauſt the French nation of its finances, than the frequent and expenſive wars in which they have, during the laſt century, been engaged; and though their armies carry the appearance of being maintained at a leſs expence than thoſe of other nations, yet the great abuſes which prevail in all their contracts, and in every commercial branch relative to ſupplying the army, make the expences of ſupporting it ſuperior to that of any other country.

In

In France, it is the object of every man's wish to enjoy a penſion under the king; it is not the emolument only, that is the motive of this deſire, for though a court penſioner is in England, rather a term of diſreſpect, yet in France it is eſteemed an honour ſo great, that every man aſpires to it, who is fond of fame: and the number of penſioners are now ſo vaſtly increaſed amongſt all ranks of the people, from the princes of the blood down to ingenious mechanics, as to become a great, and, in the preſent deranged ſituation of their finances, a moſt inſupportable load upon the ſtate.

Though it is both wiſe and juſt in a monarch, to whom the riches of a ſtate are truſted, to recompence ſuch men of talents and abilities, as have by their ſtudies and inventions promoted what is uſeful, and ſerved and advanced the conveniencies or intereſts of ſociety, yet, it muſt be confeſſed, that the able and ingenious in France, who have moſt deſerved the recompence of the court, are thoſe who enjoy the leaſt part of its favours.

Out of more than a million ſterling, which the king of France annually pays in penſions, the greateſt part is ſwallowed up by the indigence of the great people, who ſurround the throne, and the favourites and dependants of that perpetual ſucceſſion of miniſters, who have trod upon each others heels ſince the death of cardinal De Fleury.

The king's penſions have, ſince that time, been ſo ſcandalouſly proſtituted, that it hath not been for the ſervices which men of talents and diſtinguiſhed merit, have rendered to the ſtate, that have entitled them to penſions from the king, but the favour and patronage of the different miniſters to their own dependants and paraſites: if a man has been able by his ſkill in cookery, to pleaſe the languid appetite of a decrepid worn-out miniſter, in inventing a particular ſauce, or hath any ways contributed to revive his expiring paſſions, or in procuring him ſome perſonal pleaſures, it hath never failed by the influence of his patron, of obtaining him a penſion from the king.

This

This abuſe was ſo great, and its burthen upon the ſtate ſo ſenſibly felt, that when M. De Silhouette* (the only wiſe revenue-

* M. De Silhouette, who acquired his knowledge as a revenue officer, by a long reſidence in England, was rather a favourite of the parliament, and the people of Paris, than of the miniſters of the court: in the midſt of their diſtreſſes and want of money, in the year 1759, when the king could procure none but upon the moſt exorbitant intereſt; he propoſed to the court, to borrow twenty ſeven millions ſterling, at ſix per cent. with a premium, if the court would conſent to the *mode* of borrowing it by the parliament, who offered to be guarantee to the people, for the ſecurity of the money; but the court unwilling to give an importance to the parliament, which it was not entitled to, refuſed the offer, and had recourſe for money to more ruinous meaſures: in truth, by the original conſtitution of the French government, the parliament of Paris is extremely limited in its power: they can, it is true, remonſtrate, and even refuſe to enregiſter the king's edicts; but if the ſovereign preſents himſelf in parliament, and holds what they call *a lit de juſtice*, a prerogative which the monarchs of France are tender of exerting, then his will becomes the law, even without the conſent of parliament.

Great as their contentions have been of late, there was a time, even within theſe few years, that the

venue-officer, the French have long had) came to the adminiſtration of the finances in the year 1759, he found himſelf under a neceſſity to prevail upon his ſovereign to iſſue an ordonance for all thoſe who held penſions under the king, to deliver in a declaration, and ſpecify expreſsly therein, the ſervices they had done, to entitle them to them; and a proper court of juſtice of the revenue officers, was appointed to enquire into the validity of their ſervices, and by what means ſuch penſions were acquired.

This enquiry opened ſuch a ſcene of fraud, artifice, and abuſe, as would, to to any other nation but the French, have appeared moſt ſcandalous and unjuſt; yet ſo powerful was the influence of the patronage,

court ſhewed a great diſpoſition to the parliament, both of reconciliation and harmony: but it ſoon appeared, that the more conceſſions were made to a body of men, accuſtomed to ſubmiſſion and obedience, the higher they roſe in their expectations and demands; and then aimed at almoſt the ſame power and dignity as the parliament of England; ſince that time, the court have received their remonſtrances with a becoming form and ceremony, and paid them no attention.

tronage, which the favourites of the court had upon this occaſion, that even in this enquiry, ſo juſt and equitable, and at a time when the nation was diſtreſſed for money, and then ſtaggering under the burthens of the war, that able miniſter could procure for the ſtate but very ſmall advantages, where ſo many great abuſes were demonſtrated; and the penſions of thoſe only were diminiſhed, who had the beſt pretenſions for their continuance, whilſt thoſe who had proper patronage amongſt the courtiers, eſcaped without any reduction: in France, thoſe who promote the moſt uſeful arts which are relative to the advancement of agriculture and commerce, on which alone the riches and power of a ſtate depend, are neglected and unrewarded; whilſt enormous ſums of the public money, ariſing from the ſweat of the brows of the induſtrious and laborious poor, are applied to ſupport the luxuries and elegant diſſipations of thoſe who ſurround the throne, and are moſt profuſely ſquandered away upon the idle, vicious, and extravagant.

No-

Nothing contributes more towards diminiſhing the uſe and advantage of the gold and ſilver metals which the French acquire by the balance of their trade, than their own conſumption or method of applying ſuch riches. All the nations in Europe united together, have not ſo great a number of artiſts employed in the gold and ſilver trade or manufacture, as in France: as pomp and ſhew is the prevailing and darling paſſion of all ranks of people in this country, thoſe of a middling ſtate of life abound more in plate than thoſe of a much ſuperior rank in England, who are ſatisfied to be ſerved in china, or the fine earthen wares; and theſe immenſe quantities of plate, which are ſo exceſſively abundant in all the families of the firſt diſtinction, as well as of all other ranks of people, are as uſeleſs to the government, and of as little benefit to the nation, as if they ſtill continued in the mines from whence they were extracted.

It is computed, that the gold and ſilver plate in France, including that belonging to churches, and the immenſe

quantities

quantities employed in family uſes by the extravagant vanity of the people, in decorating all the utenſils belonging to the common neceſſaries of life with them, does not amount to a leſs ſum than between ſixty and ſeventy millions ſterling, which is equal to the ſum total of their circulating caſh; if this ſum, or even one half of it, was employed in improving their agriculture or their commerce, it would be of infinite advantage to the ſtate: But it is the foible of the French nation to vie with, and emulate each other in pomp and profuſion.

That able financier, M. De Silhouette, was ſo ſenſible of the diſadvantages attending the application of ſo vaſt a quantity of gold and ſilver to domeſtick uſes, and for the ſake only of pomp and luxury, that an invitation was made to the people, during his adminiſtration, to ſhew their zeal for the ſtate, by bringing all the ſuperfluous part of their gold and ſilver utenſils to the mint, to have it coined into circulating caſh; one half of its value was to be paid in ready money, and

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the other half to be lent to the king at four per cent. But ſuch was the fondneſs of the people for their gold and ſilver utenſils, that, though the ſcheme was conducted under every advantage to excite the people's patriotiſm, by publiſhing the names of thoſe who ſhewed their zeal for the government by bringing in their plate, yet it did not produce more than ſix hundred thouſand pounds ſterling.

The quantity of money in a nation may be gueſſed at by the intereſt which people pay for the uſe of it; for the intereſt of money is dependant upon the quantity of it in circulation: when money is very plenty, intereſt will be low; when it is ſcarce, intereſt will be high. It is of the higheſt advantage to a nation, when the people of it can borrow money at a low intereſt, for then they may borrow it and employ it, either in trade or agriculture, and get thereby ſufficient to live upon, beſides paying the intereſt: but ſuch is the general want of money in France, that it is with more difficulty procured there at ſix per cent. intereſt, than in England at four.

Having

Having given your Lordſhip in the foregoing, only a brief and conciſe view of the riches of the French nation, I ſhall, as ſoon as my health and time will permit, ſend you a particular eſtimate of the preſent ſtate of the monied intereſt in France, the circumſtances of their national debt, and every thing that is immediately relative to their revenues, their finances, and their reſources of government; for as the real ſtrength and power of rival nations is beſt known by a compariſon of their revenues and reſources, your Lordſhip's friends will then be convinced, that the preſent ſtate of the finances of France is in a more deranged and exhauſted condition, than even the ſtate of its landed intereſt; and yet, by the ſuperior addreſs and ambition of the miniſter, the French ſtill keep up the appearances of a formidable power, but which can impoſe upon thoſe only who are eaſily deluded, and take appearances for realities.

Celebrated as the French nation hath been in ſome periods of the laſt century, for miniſters of ſuperior addreſs and abi-

lities, none of them ever equalled their preſent chief: I ſhall therefore conclude this letter, by giving your Lordſhip a ſhort deſcription of the character and conduct of the preſent firſt miniſter.

He is a man of exceſſive ambition and intrepidity, and of a moſt refined addreſs; and though brought up in a life of pleaſure and diſſipation in the army, and was, at the time he came into power, unacquainted with the firſt rudiments of government, yet, by the favour of his ſovereign, he was entruſted to conduct both the late war, and the late peace. Born of a family in Lorrain, more diſtinguiſhed for its antiquity, than its opulence; he, ſoon after he came into power, ſurpaſſed all the other nobles in ſplendour and profuſion; and became in a little time ſo intoxicated with pomp and oſtentation, as brought upon him the envy and hatred of all ranks of his fellow-ſubjects. With a ſucceſs never equalled by the great Richlieu himſelf, he hath trampled under foot the power and jealouſy of all the princes of the blood; the diſcontents of the army;

my; the complaints of the hydra-headed clergy; and the reſentments of all the collective bodies of men in the whole kingdom. Equally ſucceſsful in extricating his country out of a moſt unfortunate war, as in framing a formidable confederacy of all the princes of the blood of Bourbon into one family-compact, and reconciling the jealouſy and hatred that had long ſubſiſted between the courts of Vienna and Verſailles, he now enjoys in full poſſeſſion, a power, with which he would, like Louis, the fourteenth, inſult all Europe, but that he is conſcious, the reſources of his country are too much exhauſted to ſupport his boundleſs ambition in any expenſive projects.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's,

&c. &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

Chantclou, Feb. 6, 1770.

IT is now more than two months, ſince I firſt ſat down to write your Lordſhip the above letter, but the frequent intervals of bad health, have, till now, prevented my finiſhing it.

I well remember, it was an obſervation your Lordſhip frequently made, during your reſidence on this ſide the water, that the happineſs of every ſtate, particularly of thoſe ſtates, where the ſovereigns are abſolute, intirely depends on the perſonal characters of thoſe men who are principal actors in the affairs ofgovernment: it may be allowed me then to remark, that ſome of the moſt judicious men in this country, who lived in the time of the regency, and with whom I frequently converſe, pretend

to

to find a ſtrange reſemblance in the characters of the preſent chief miniſter, and the late regent of France.

The adminiſtrations of both, it is certain, form very intereſting periods in the hiſtory of this country.

The preſent chief miniſter of France, *they ſay*, without the knowledge or the ſagacity of a profound ſtateſman, has ventured upon a career of ſuch deſpotick conduct, as the moſt intrepid of their former arbitrary miniſters, would have trembled at: ſo great, they add, is his contempt for the wiſe maxims of policy, tranſmitted down by his predeceſſors in power, that like the regent, he is alone guided by the influence of power, and by events and occurrences as they happen.

But this pretended reſemblance, it muſt in charity be ſuppoſed, is ſtronger in their political, than in their private characters; for if credit may be given to a noble Lord of our own nation, who, during his exile in this country, was often, it is ſaid, the regent's companion in his nocturnal revels,

revels, he was not a pattern of the ſtricteſt virtue.

" The ſucceſſor (ſays this noble Lord *) to Louis the fourteenth of France, not to the throne, but to the ſovereign power, was a mere rake, with ſome wit, but no morals; nay, with ſo little regard to them, that he made them a ſubject of ridicule in diſcourſe, and appeared in his whole conduct, more profligate, if that could be, than he was in principle."

The preſent chief miniſter of France,

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too ſtrong in power to attend to the remonſtrances of the parliaments, or the murmurs and complaints of the people, purſues thoſe objects of adminiſtration, which caprice, folly, or the convenience of the preſent moment alone dictates.

It was thought by all the ſober thinking men in the nation, a violent exertion of power, when in the month of December one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty four,

* Bolingbroke's idea of a patriot king.

four, the national creditors were defrauded of ten per cent. of the intereſt of that money, which under all the legal forms of the conſtitution, had been lent to the king to ſupport the ſtate in its wants, and diſtreſſes.

That tax of ten per cent. was laid under a plauſible pretence of forming a caiſſe d'amortiſement, to liquidated and pay off the debt of the ſtate, but tho' it has not produced leſs than ſix hundred thouſand pounds ſterling a year, ſo far from being employed to the uſe of its inſtitution, it has been profuſely ſquandered away in acts of generoſity, to ſupport the brilliant diſſipations of the needy dependants of the court; and the king, by an edict of the laſt month, has now, for eight years, appropriated it to pay his own perſonal debts. When that caiſſe d'amortiſement was eſtabliſhed, M. De L'Averdy, the late comptroller general of the finances, a member, and great favourite in the parliament of Paris, for the activity he had ſhewn in the deſtruction of the jeſuits,

then

then had ſo much influence with the court, as to procure a committee out of the body of the parliament to be the truſtees, and adminiſtrators of the new ſinking funds, independant of the miniſters of the court; but ſuch is the ſeduction and influence of the court of Verſailles, that the committee itſelf, ſoon became as obſequious courtiers as the miniſter could wiſh.

But the operation of the finances in the month of December, one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſixty four, violent and arbitrary as it was, is now buried in oblivion, by the greater deſpotiſm of ſome late *arrets* which have cauſed a ſtrange conſternation amongſt all the creditors of the ſtate.

By the *arret* of the eighteenth day of the laſt month, it deprives of any future advantages, the proprietors and ſucceſſors of all the tontines, exiſting from the year 1709 to that of 1759 included, which proprietors are now limited to receive their annuities only, without any encreaſe from the death of others.

By

By the arret of January the 20th, thoſe debts which were borrowed by the king, under all the legal forms, at five per cent. intereſt, are now, by an act of power, for the future, to be only paid at two and a half per cent. without offering to the national creditors, their original debt, if they were not ſatisfied with a reduction of the intereſt.

The laſt arret, which this day appeared, dated January the 29th, is a tax upon the penſions paid by the king; thoſe amounting to the ſum of ſix hundred livres, ſhall pay a tax of two ſhillings in the pound; thoſe from ſix to twelve hundred livres, half a crown; thoſe from twelve to eighteen hundred, four ſhillings; and thoſe of two thouſand four hundred livres and upwards, ſhall pay ſix ſhillings in the pound.

The arret, my Lord, of January the 20th, has thrown the whole nation into a conſternation, not to be expreſſed, and beſides the injury done to private individuals, has laid the axe to the root of their

future credit, for now, to uſe an expreſſion of the judicious Monteſquieu, " they have cut down the tree to gather the fruit."

Theſe arrets, cruel and deſpotic as they are, is only a prelude to ſome others, which are daily expected to appear, and which, from the diſtreſſes of the ſtate, and the caprice of the miniſters, may, perhaps, be as tyrannical as that deteſtable edict, thundered out by the late regent in the year 1719, by which every private citizen in the ſtate, was compelled, under *pain of death*, to bring into the king's treaſury. whatever ſums of money he was poſſeſſed of, that exceeded five hundred livres.

Already five edicts and arrets, concerning a reform, and regulations in their finances, have appeared, during the courſe of the laſt month; and ten more relative to the ſame ſubject, are expected within a few months more; the next edict, it is preſumed, will be a tax upon coaches, livery-ſervants, upon parks, and hunting

foreſts;

foreſts ; which hitherto, with moſt of the other objects of luxury, have eſcaped any contribution to the expences of government ; the particulars of the future edicts and arrets, and the effects they will produce, ſhall be the ſubject of a future letter ; till then, my Lord, once more, adieu.

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